

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6428

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 12078

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: MARONITE PATRIARCH KHURAYSH'S VIEWS ON CURRENT SITUATION

REF: DEPTEL 231077

1. SPENT TWO AND A HALF HOURS ALONE WITH PATRIARCH YESTERDAY. HE IS EXTREMELY WORRIED OVER CURRENT SITUATION AND OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT REPEAT NOT SHARE THE VIEWS OF RIGHT-WING MARONITES, INCLUDING PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND PHALANGE CHIEF PIERRE GEMAYEL. HE STRONGLY ADVOCATES SOCIAL REFORM AND RECOGNIZES THAT MOSLEMS MUST BE GIVEN SOME ASSURANCES THAT MARONITE MONPOLOY OF POWER IS A THING OF THE PAST. AS TO DETAILS, HOWEVER, HE IS VAGUE AND ADMITS L

E IS GROPING. BEING FROM THE EXTREME SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE LEBANON AND HAVING SERVED SOME TIME IN HAIFA, KHURAYSH IS SYMPATHETIC TO PALESTINIAN PROBLEMS AND UNDERSTANDS THEIR REQUIREMENTS. HE FEARS ISRAELI DESIRES RE THE SOUTHERN LEBANON BUT AT THE SAME TIME IS CERTAINLY MORE THOUGHTFUL AND MODERATE IN

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DISCUSSING ISRAEL THAN MOST OF THIS LEBANESE COUNTERPARTS.

2. RE OUR ROLE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, HE VEHEMENTLY EXCLUDED ANY POSSIBILITY OF U.S. MILITARY ACTION AND ADMITTED THAT SOME MARONITES DREAM OF IT. HE ALSO REALIZES THAT OUR CURRENT ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAS GIVEN US RESPONSIBILITIES THAT WE MAY NOT HAVE RECOGNIZED HERETOFORE, WHICH RESPONSIBILITIES IN TURN ENTAIL LIMITS ON POSSIBLE ACTIONS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

3. AFTER THE FOREGOING EXCHANGE OF GENERALITIES, PATRIARCH PRODUCED A PIECE OF PAPER WITH FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. "WHAT IS U.S. POSITION VIS-A-VIS LEBANON AND ESPECIALLY VIS-A-VIS CHRISTIANS IN THIS COUNTRY?" I CITED ASSURANCES FROM OUR LAST TWO PRESIDENTS REGARDING LEBANESE INTEGRITY.

RE CHRISTIANS, AVOIDED DIRECT RESPONSE, CITING MY PERSONAL VIEW THAT THEY HAD TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEIR MOSLEM BROTHERS.

B. "FACTS INDICATE THAT THE DIFFERENCE DIVIDING LEBANESE IS CONFESSIONAL, ALTHOUGH THE OTHER SIDE CLAIMS IT IS ONLY SOCIAL. AS IS KNOWN TO ALL, THE PATRIARCHY HAS ALWAYS WORKED TO REDUCE THE CONFESSIONAL CHARACTER OF THE DIFFERENCE. BUT SHOULD THE SITUATION GROW MORE SERIOUS, TO WHAT DEGREE WOULD THE USG HELP, AND HOW? COULD IT EXERT PRESSURE ON ARAB STATES AND INTEREST WESTERN POWERS IN THIS ENDEAVOR?" I AVOIDED A DIRECT ANSWER. SPOKE OF PATRIARCH'S OWN LIBERAL SOCIAL VIEWS AND AGREED THAT THERE WERE MANY ASPECTS OF THE CURRENT STRIFE THAT WERE PURELY CONFESSIONAL. THIS OF COURSE GREATLY COMPLICATED THE SITUATION. I ASKED PATRIARCH WHAT HE THOUGHT USG MIGHT DO AND WE DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH OUR GETTING OTHER ARABS TO ADOPT CONVINCITIVE ATTITUDES. HE AGREED THAT SOLUTION COULD BEST BE FOUND WITHIN AN ARAB CONTEXT.

C. "WHERE ARE RUMORS, ACCORDING TO WHICH THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WOULD BE SOLVED AT LEBANESE EXPENSE, THAT PALESTINIANS WILL REMAIN IN LEBANON AND WILL OCCUPY A LARGE PORTION OF THE SOUTH, WHICH WOULD BECOME THEIR HOMELAND OR A PART OF THEIR HOMELAND. IS THERE ANY BASIS TO THESE RUMORS AND WHAT

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WOULD BE THE POSITION OF THE USG WITH REGARD TO SUCH A POSSIBILITY?" I TOLD KHURAYSH THAT I HAD HEARD THESE RUMORS WHICH WERE BEING SPREAD, PRINCIPALLY (KHURAYSH AGREED) BY RAYMOND EDDE. I CONSIDERED THE ALLEGED U.S. SUPPORT OF SUCH AN EVENTUALITY AS MALICIOUS GOSSIP IN VIEW OF OUR PRESIDENTS' ASSURANCES RE LEBANESE INTEGRITY AND ALSO THE FACT THAT WE WERE LEAVING NO STONE UNTURNED IN OUR EFFORTS TO FIND JUST AND DURABLE PEACE IN THIS AREA. I NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE LEBANESE COULD NOT REPEAT

NOT THEMSELVES FIND A SOLUTION TO THEIR PROBLEM AND
IF THEY CONTINUED THEIR INTERNECINE WARFARE, THE
PALESTINIANS COULD WELL TAKE OVER A PORTION OF THE
COUNTRY. THIS WOULD BE REGRETTABLE, BUT I DID NOT THINK
ANYONE SHOULD ASSUME WE WOULD USE FORCE TO MAINTAIN THE
STATUS QUO.

D. "THE MARONITES AND OTHER CHRISTIANS INSIST THAT
THE PATRIARCH GO TO EUROPE, THE UNITED STATES AND TO
THE UN TO PRESENT AND TO ETD THE LEBANESE CASE.
WOULD SUCH A TRIP BE USEFUL? COULD THE USG CONTRIBUTE
TO THE SUCCESS OF SUCH A DEMARCHE?" I TOLD THE PATRIARCH
THAT I THOUGHT HIS WISDOM AND MODERATION WERE REQUIRED HERE AT
HOME. WHILE I HOPED THAT AT SOME TIME
IN THE FUTURE HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO VISIT OUR COUNTRY
AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER, I DID NOT BELIEVE A POLITICAL
VISIT NOW WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. AS SOME MIGHT CITE
MAKARIOS AS A PRECEDENT, I POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH
A RELIGIOUS LEADER, MAKARIOS' ACTIVITIES IN THE UN AND
ELSEWHERE WERE BASED PURELY ON HIS POLITICAL POSITION.
KHURAYSH SAID HE WAS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO HIS TRAVELING
AT THIS TIME AND WAS THEREFORE PLEASED WITH MY VIEWS,
FOR HE WAS UNDER "GREAT PRESSURE" BY SOME LEADERS TO
TRAVEL. HE HIMSELF RAISED THE COMPARISON OF OTHER LEBANESE
RELIGIOUS LEADERS PLEADING A POLITICAL CASE OUTSIDE THIS
COUNTRY.

NOTE BY OC/T: TEXT AS RECEIVED.

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LIMDIS

4. KHURAYSH WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO EMPHASIZE THE PRIVATE NATURE OF OUR TALK. ALTHOUGH FRENCH AMBASSADOR CALLED ON KHURAYSH AND THAT VISIT RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY, HE SAID IT PRODUCED NOTHING AND HE COULD THEREFORE EXPLAIN IT EASILY TO SOME OF HIS ASSOCIATES. TALKING TO THE USG'S REP, HOWEVER, WAS DIFFERENT MATTER AND THEREFORE HE HOPED MY VISIT COULD BE KEPT OUT OF THE PRESS. I AGREED.

5. PAPAL NUNCIO BRUNIERA LEFT FOR A MONTH'S LEAVE ABOUT SEPTEMBER 13. HE RETURNED, HOWEVER, SEPT 27 AND WILL BE SEEING KHURAYSH TODAY. I ASKED KHURAYSH IF HE HAD HEARD FROM THE POPE RE THE CURRENT CRISIS. HE SAID HE HAD NOT BUT EXPECTED THE NUNCIO MIGHT BE BRINGING A MESSAGE. NUNCIO'S RETURN IS INDICATIVE OF VATICAN CONCERN. I HOPE TO BE SEEING HIM SOON.

GODLEY

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